



Parking Advisory Committee

Date: February 17, 2021

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation

Minutes

In Attendance: Ali Carter, Daniel Amstutz, Adam Chapdelaine, Leland Stein, Phyllis Marshall, Mike Rademacher, John Hurd, Howard Muise, Corey Rateau, Jill Mirak, Darcy Devney, Laura Munsey, Loretta Mosca, Aram Hollman.

1. Greetings and introductions, ground rules for online meetings.

Adam Chapdelaine read a set of prepared remarks explaining the procedures that the Committee would follow to hold a virtual meeting. Governor Baker signed an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowing virtual meetings, which suspended the usual Open Meeting Law requirement that a quorum of committee members be physically present in order to hold an official committee meeting. Chapdelaine confirmed the committee members in attendance for the meeting.

Chapdelaine introduced Laura Munsey, the new Parking Collections Manager, who recently moved from the Health and Human Services Department to the Treasurer's Office.

Chapdelaine passed control of the meeting to Daniel Amstutz to move to the next items on the agenda. Amstutz noted he would move to agenda item #6 (Resident Parking Waiver on Whittemore Street) after the approval of the minutes because two residents were attending the meeting who wished to speak on that item.

2. Approval of the minutes for the December 2, 2020 meeting.

Minutes were approved.

3. Select Board referral: Resident Parking Waiver on Whittemore Street (previously Agenda Item #6).

Amstutz explained that the Select Board had referred a request to the Parking Advisory Committee that came from Loretta Mosca, owner of

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26-28 Whittemore Street. The request is to have residents of Whittemore Street be exempt from the 4-hour parking time limit that is in place on Whittemore Street. Amstutz noted that Aram Hollman, 12 Whittemore Street, sent a letter just before this meeting explaining his opposition to this request.

Mosca said she agrees with the 4-hour time limit to park on Whittemore Street as it discourages all-day parking of commuters who want to park on the street and take the bus or train into Boston. However, many properties along the street have small driveways which makes it inconvenient for her tenants and other residents to coordinate moving their cars in and out of the driveways. She has mailed out a petition to the residents along the street to ask for their support for this request and will provide that information to the Committee later.

Hollman said he is speaking on behalf of himself and four other neighbors who live at 16, 20, and 22 Whittemore Street. He noted they all object to this request for various reasons. They also have tandem parking and must deal with this issue on a regular basis. He said Mosca has several tenants who own several cars and frequently take up parking spaces on the street, depriving the other residents of the street the ability to park on the street. He is sympathetic to Mosca's situation but disagrees with the request because it would allow her tenants to use up more of a publicly available resource on the street. He said things have been better since the implementation of the 4-hour time limit and greater enforcement would be appreciated. He asked how this exemption would be allowed since he does not see a provision for it in the Town parking regulations. Officer Corey Rateau explained that the Select Board has granted resident parking permits in the past, but in rare cases and generally on a trial basis. He noted this is a public street and it cannot be treated as a private way. Chapdelaine asked if recommending this request would lead to further requests from residents on other streets for the same treatment. Rateau said he would expect other residents in the Center and East Arlington would also want a permit or exception to park freely on their streets as well. Similar issues have been frequently brought up in East Arlington due to commuter parking near Alewife.

Darcy Devney asked for clarification on the referral process from the Board to the PAC. Chapdelaine explained that the issue at hand seems to do with the 4-hour parking limit, which was implemented with the Arlington Center Parking Study and overseen by the PAC, which is why it was referred to this committee. Devney asked about enforcement of a permit parking situation as well. Phyllis Marshall explained that Treasurer's Office sells monthly parking permits and on-street parking permits where that has been implemented.

Hollman added that a nearby development was recently approved that allowed for tandem parking for three cars deep and noted the Town should be careful about setting a precedent if it were to approve a permit for residents to park all day on Whittemore Street. Amstutz thanked Mosca and Hollman for attending the meeting and closed out the agenda item.

4. Treasurer's Office updates: new Parking & Collections Manager and Parking Benefits District (PBD) financial information.

Marshall noted she sent around a spreadsheet of information on the parking meter revenues. Due to the pandemic, suspension of parking fines, snow events, and changes in parking habits due to limitations on indoor dining, revenues are significantly down. So far in fiscal year 2021 they have collected only \$35,000 when they originally projected for \$520,000. It's very difficult to project what revenues will look like given the uncertainties currently. About \$91,000 in the PBD has been encumbered for the Arlington Center sidewalk project. The last payment on the lease for the parking meters is due later this year. There are other regular expenses such as maintenance that need to be considered, that are still ongoing. They plan on spending about \$40,000 this year to upgrade the modems on the meters, but are figuring out the right way to do that.

Jill Mirak said it would be helpful to have a document to explain the expenses and other costs to the parking budget and how it affects what is available in the PBD. Marshall noted many annual costs are the same and said she can put this information together. Some of the funds in reserve would need to be used for annual expenses instead of new projects. Chapdelaine noted the PBD currently has about \$350,000 in it, partly from previous years reserve built up. However, recommendations for spending from the PBD would need to be scaled back due to the large loss of revenue. The committee should focus on operational funding issues as opposed to capital projects. Devney asked when the PBD spending recommendation needs to be submitted to the Finance Committee for Town Meeting appropriation. Chapdelaine noted a recommendation would need to be provided soon for the Finance Committee's report by late March or early April. Amstutz noted it seemed difficult to make a recommendation without better financial information. Ali Carter agreed and said other major projects like Broadway Plaza need to be considered as well. Chapdelaine noted the continued support of plantings in the Center by Inspired Gardens was appreciated by residents and business owners; it was noted that this cost about \$20,000 per year. Committee members agreed that this was a worthwhile expense. Chapdelaine moved to recommend expending \$20,000 for next year from the PBD fund for the plantings along Mass Ave in the Center. Mirak seconded. The committee voted unanimously on the

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recommendation on a roll call vote.

5. PaybyPhone/mobile parking payment update.

Amstutz shared reports from PaybyPhone on the usage of their app for mobile parking payment. The data was pulled out in early February. There have been about 5,800 transactions processed; about 2,800 unique users of PaybyPhone in Arlington; and \$11,200 in parking revenue has been generated (not accounting for the per transaction fee). PaybyPhone is being used mostly around the Broadway Plaza area, Russell Common Lot, and Railroad lot. Like the update last meeting, most parking sessions start at 8 am and level off over the day. Marshall noted that the Treasurer's Office receives the PaybyPhone parking fee payments about three weeks into the next month, which is why some of her numbers may not match up with the PaybyPhone dashboard information. Rateau noted it may take some time before the numbers make sense due to the fluctuations in parking revenues recently. He added that the backend portal is very helpful data and for addressing parking issues that come up with the app.

6. Parking Benefit District funding – discuss availability and use for future projects.

This was covered under Agenda Item #4.

7. Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee.

Mirak explained that this is a subcommittee in the Chamber of Commerce and it is working on a vision and goals to support economic recovery, and beyond. Beth Locke, the Executive Director of the Chamber, is applying for tourism grant funds. They are also working on increasing tourism in the town.

8. Any other business.

Leland Stein said he now has a plug-in hybrid car and is appreciative of the access to EV charging stations provided by the town.

Mirak suggested that the committee meet more often, perhaps monthly.

9. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 PM.